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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
TO RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
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RUEAHL/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASHDC IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 001980

SIPDIS

DHS/USCG FOR M. BROWN, NEA/ELA FOR WEST, EBB/TRA FOR  
HAYWOOD, OSD FOR AGUIRRE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/09/2018  
TAGS: [EWWT](#) [PREL](#) [EG](#)  
SUBJECT: APPARENT PROGRESS IN NEGOTIATIONS FOR A MARITIME  
AND PORT SECURITY ASSESSMENT IN EGYPT

REF: A. USCG BROWN-SIDEREAS EMAIL 7/21/08  
[1](#)B. CAIRO 542  
[1](#)C. SIDEREAS-HAYWOOD EMAIL 9/8/08

Classified By: Minister Counselor for Economic and Political Affairs  
William R. Stewart for reasons (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (U) ACTION REQUEST IN PARAGRAPH 4.

[1](#)2. (SBU) After two years of advocacy in support of a U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) visit to Egyptian ports to review compliance with the International Ship and Port Security (ISPS) standards, Embassy Cairo notes a possible change of attitude from relevant GOE authorities. Ambassador Scobey raised the importance of information-sharing on maritime security issues with Foreign Minister Aboul Gheit on August 24 and asked him to encourage the Ministries of Defense (MoD) and Transport (MoT) to accept the USCG's August 18 invitation to the ministries to send their port specialists to the U.S. to observe and assess our security practices (ref A).

[1](#)3. (C) We believe that opposition to a USCG assessment of Egyptian ports stemmed from sovereignty concerns within the MoD. However, the Ambassador's call on the foreign minister appears to have changed the GOE approach to the idea of a reciprocal exchange of assessment visits. In his bi-weekly meeting with Major General Al Assar, Deputy Assistant Minister of Defense for Policy, on September 8, OMC Chief Major General Williams raised the issue of ISPS compliance and encouraged MG Al Assar to accept the USCG's invitation to GOE port specialists. He also asked that the GOE permit an assessment visit to Egyptian ports in return. MG Al Assar was aware of the Ambassador's discussion with FM Aboul Gheit and said that the MoD was working closely with the MFA to provide a coordinated response from the GOE. This is a change from MG Al Assar's last meeting with the embassy on this topic in March 2008, when he adamantly refused to consider a port assessment visit (refs B and C).

[1](#)4. (C) ACTION REQUEST: We ask that the Maritime Security Policy Coordinating Committee take these developments into consideration and postpone a decision on Egypt's ISPS compliance until October in order to give the MFA and other advocates within the GOE time to work this issue toward a positive outcome.  
SCOBEY